

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
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O R 241555Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2267
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMCONSUL DURBAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4966

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONVERSATIONS WITH CHIRAU AND DUMBUTSHENA

1. GRAHAM AND I CALLED ON CHIEF CHIRAU WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23.
THE MEETING WAS THE FIRST REALLY DETAILED DISCUSSION WE HAVE
EVER BEEN ABLE TO ENGAGE HIM IN ON THE DIFFERENCES SEPARATING
THE PARTIES. HE TOOK CAREFUL NOTE OF THE VARIOUS POINTS
AND QUESTIONED US CLOSELY ON EACH OF THE SUBJECTS.

2. WE STARTED BY WELCOMING HIS STATEMENT OF AUGUST 17
SUPPORTING AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING. HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD
MADE IT NOT AT THE REQUEST OF SECURITY FORCES OR ANYONE ELSE,
BUT IN RESPONSE TO WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY THE OVERWHELMING DESIRE
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OF THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA.

3. GRAHAM AND I THEN REVIEWED IN DETAIL THE AREAS WHERE
WE THOUGHT MODIFICATION OF THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT WOULD
HAVE TO BE MADE IF THE MEETING WAS TO BE SUCCESSFUL, AS WE
HAD IN DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHERS HERE IN SALISBURY. WE
EXPLAINED THE ROLE WE THOUGHT THE FRONT LINE COULD PLAY

IN HELPING TO URGE A MODERATE POSITION ON THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, PROVIDED THAT SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT WERE MADE. CHIRAU QUESTIONED US CLOSELY ON THE POSITION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ON EACH OF THESE ISSUES. HE WAS MOST INTERESTED IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL AND ASKED US WHY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SHOULD GET FOUR SEATS FOR TWO PARTIES WHILE THE SALISBURY GROUP GOT FOUR SEATS FOR FOUR PARTIES. WE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS NOT THAT WE WERE ADVOCATING SUCH A DIVISION OF POWER BUT THAT WE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WOULD ACCEPT LESS THAN PARITY. AT THE MOMENT THEY WERE DEMANDING A MAJORITY. WE SAID THAT WHILE WE SUPPORTED NO PARTY, WE FELT THAT THE TRANSITION PERIOD SHOULD BE AS TRULY IMPARTIAL AS POSSIBLE, AND THEREFORE THAT WE COULD BEST SUPPORT AN ARRANGEMENT IN WHICH NEITHER OF THE TWO SIDES HAD AN UPPER HAND.

4. CHIRAU ASKED US ABOUT TIMING AND LOCATION FOR THE CONFERENCE. WE STRESSED THE URGENCY OF PROCEEDING WITH A CONFERENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT SUGGESTING SPECIFIC DATES. ON LOCATION, GRAHAM DESCRIBED AT LENGTH THE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES AND THE PROBLEMS WHICH WERE INVOLVED WITH EACH ONE. WHEN HE GOT TO LUANGWA IN ZAMBIA, CHIRAU CLOSED HIS EYES AND FIRMLY SHOOK HIS HEAD FROM SIDE TO SIDE. HE PREFERRED A LOCATION INSIDE RHODESIA BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT

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WOULD HAVE FOR BOTH POLITICAL AND SECURITY REASONS. HE REMAINED, HOWEVER, FIRMLY OPPOSED TO A MEETING IN ZAMBIA.

5. GRAHAM AND I LUNCED FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH RHODESIA'S SENIOR AFRICAN LAWYER, ENOUGH DUMBUTSHENA, WHO IS A UANC SUPPORTER OF BISHOP MUZOREWA'S. WE REVIEWED ALL THE SAME GROUND AND AGAIN CAME TO THE SUBJECT OF THE LOCATION FOR THE CONFERENCE. DUMBUTSHENA SAID THAT A VENUE IN ZAMBIA WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR MUZOREWA TO ACCEPT. IN SUPPORT HE DESCRIBED THE HUMILIATING CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH MUZOREWA HAD TO LEAVE ZAMBIA AT KAUNDA'S DEMAND IN 1976. WE ASKED WHETHER A LETTER FROM KAUNDA INVITING THE PARTICIPANTS MIGHT HELP. DUMBUTSHENA SAID IT COULD BUT DOUBTED THAT ANYTHING WOULD CHANGE MUZOREWA'S OPPOSITION TO THE MEETING THERE. HE ADDED THAT HE, GEORGE NYANDORO, AND STANLAKE SAMKANGE WERE MEMBERS OF A COMMITTEE WHICH THE BISHOP HAD NAMED AND WOULD MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT AFTERNOON TO ADVISE HIM ON THE MATTER OF AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING.

6. COMMENT: GRAHAM AND I BELIEVE THAT IF THERE IS TO BE A MEETING, IT WILL HAVE TO BE HELD OUTSIDE ZAMBIA.

WE DOUBT THE POSSIBILITY OF ALTERNATING BETWEEN A SITE
IN ZAMBIA AND ANOTHER IN RHODESIA, BELIEVING THAT NEITHER
PARTY WOULD ACCEPT THAT. HOWEVER, WE ARE CONTINUING TO
SUPPORT THE ZAMBIAN LOCATION IN OUR CONVERSATIONS HERE. SINCE
WE HAVE NO MEETING DATE WAS ARE NOT DELAYING MATTERS, BUT
IF A TIME FOR A CONFERENCE IS DECIDED, WE BELIEVE THAT
CONTINUING TO PRESS FOR LUANGWA OR A ZAMIBIAN SITE WOULD
PROBABLY CREATE AN ISSUE AND DELAY CONVENING OF THE MEETING.
EDMONDSON

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